

**Iraq's foreign policy to be modified**

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iraqi minister stressed that his country would abide by an independent foreign policy which he said would change in harmony with the current international situation. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Sa'ed Al Sahaf did not spell out how Iraq's foreign policy would change in remarks to a parliamentary Arab and international relations committee on Saturday, the Iraqi News Agency reported. "In view of the current world situation, Iraq's foreign policy will undergo some changes on the level of international and economic relations and the national, pan-Arab and regional security," the agency quoted Mr. Sahaf as saying. Mr. Sahaf has just returned from an Arab League ministerial session in Cairo, the first visit to the Egyptian capital by an Iraqi cabinet member since the Gulf war broke out over Iraq's occupation of Kuwait last August 2. He told the Cairo meeting that his participation was meant to "heal the wound... and unite the Arab front," a reference to the split in Arab ranks over the Gulf conflict.

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**Saleh lauds Jordan-Yemen ties**

AMMAN (Petra) — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh Sunday voiced appreciation to His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian people and praised relations between the Yemeni and Jordanian peoples. In a statement to the Arabic service of Radio Jordan, President Saleh said the Republic of Yemen "has embarked on a pan-Arab move in a bid to reconcile Arabs, build Arab solidarity and heal inter-Arab rifts caused by the Gulf crisis." President Saleh expressed hope that Arabs open a new chapter in inter-Arab dealings and put an end to the current division, "which serves nobody except enemies of the Arab Nation." Answering a question about the referendum on the unity's constitution which took place in Yemen recently (see page 2) he said he hoped results would be positive despite the crisis which the region has been through. President Saleh said Yemeni unity has yielded great results in terms of development and the reunion of the one Yemeni family and has unified the capacities of the two parts of Yemen. He noted that the declaration of unity between the two parts of Yemen on May 22 last year is an achievement for both the Arab and Muslim nations as well as the Yemeni people.

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**Holiday announced**

AMMAN (Petra) — All ministries, government departments and public institutions will be closed Saturday, May 25, in observance of Independence Day.

**Portuguese foreign minister due today**

AMMAN (Petra) — Portuguese Foreign Minister Joao de Deus Pinheiro is due to arrive in Amman Monday on a two-day visit to Jordan during which he will meet senior Jordanian officials. Mr. Pinheiro will meet Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri for talks on bilateral relations, the situation in the region and Arab-European relations.

**Palestinian leaders support Nathan**

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestinian leaders from the occupied territories went to Tel Aviv Sunday to support peace crusader Abie Nathan on the 22nd day of his hunger strike. Mr. Nathan, 64, launched his hunger strike to protest a 1986 law which forbids contacts with groups that Israel considers "terrorist," including the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Ten Palestinian activists, including Faisal Husseini and Sari Nusseibah, visited Mr. Nathan at the Tel Aviv hotel where he has spent the hunger strike. "They came to show me support and asked me to stop the strike because they needed me," Mr. Nathan said in a telephone interview. "They told me that Palestinians abroad and in Israel all support me."

**Jewish youths stab young Arabs**

TEL AVIV (R) — Jewish youths stabbed two Israeli Arabs after an argument over politics in a Haifa discotheque overnight, Israel Radio said Sunday. One Arab youth was moderately wounded and the other was lightly injured.

**Exiled ex-president returns to Chad**

N'DJAMENA (R) — Chad's exiled former President Goukouni Oueddei has returned to an official welcome in the Central African country after a coup last year which toppled his enemy Hissene Habre. Mr. Goukouni arrived in the capital N'djamena late Saturday after nine years in Libya. He was met by government officials including Interior Minister Maloum Abbas and Foreign Minister Ahmad Soungui. Mr. Goukouni fled Chad in 1982 when Mr. Habre seized power after a prolonged civil war. Mr. Habre was in turn ousted last December by Chad's current leader Idris Deby.

**Egypt has withdrawn 2,500 troops from**

Gulf

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt has pulled out 2,500 soldiers from the Gulf since President Hosni Mubarak decided to withdraw his forces from the area last month, military sources said Sunday. Mr. Mubarak announced on May 8 that he has started withdrawing his troops from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He said they will all be home by August. Egypt sent 36,000 troops to Saudi Arabia and 2,500 to the United Arab Emirates after Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2. They participated in the U.S.-led multinational force which fought Iraqi troops. The Egyptian troops were supposed to stay there and form along with Syria's 19,000 forces, that also participated in the anti-Iraq coalition, the core of a regional Arab security force.

**Sudan's junta ready for talks with rebels**

CAIRO (R) — Sudan's military government is prepared to resume stalled peace talks with rebels at any time to end an eight-year war in the south of the country, a member of Khartoum's ruling junta said in remarks published Sunday. Colonel Mohammad Al Amri Khalifa said the government was ready to talk to the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) "anytime, anywhere and with no" preconditions.

In a sometimes heated inter-

## PLO, Arab states may meet soon on peace strategy — Kaddoumi

AMMAN (J.T.) — Leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Arab states directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict may meet soon to discuss strategy, a PLO official said Sunday.

Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's foreign affairs department, told reporters that most of the Arab countries "have shown considerable positive response to the idea."

He did not specify a date for a meeting nor say where it would be held.

"This question was discussed during the Arab League's 95th session held in Cairo and the response to the suggestion for such a meeting on the part of the concerned Arab parties was favourable," said Mr. Kaddoumi, who arrived here Saturday evening.

Mr. Kaddoumi also said that Palestinian-Syrian relations were improving gradually. He revealed that a meeting had recently taken place between himself and the Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaf.

Asked whether he believed the area was about to witness a genuine peace process, following U.S. Secretary of State Mr. James Baker's four tours, Mr. Kaddoumi said that the United States was exerting efforts in this regard. "We do not want to judge these efforts now, but we can only watch with great concern and alertness the various developments since Israel's intransigence is clear to all," he said.

Referring to the European stand, Mr. Kaddoumi said that it was clear that the European nations "adhere to their role of

another meeting with the Syrian minister to discuss matters of mutual concern."

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that Mr. Kaddoumi reviewed with Mr. Badran the latest developments in the ongoing efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement or the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine problem.

Petra said that the two sides emphasised the need to pursue coordination vis-a-vis these efforts, "which must focus on the implementation of international legitimacy and U.N. Security Council resolution 242 and 338."

Mr. Kaddoumi stressed the need for close coordination and cooperation between the PLO and Jordan on the one hand and among all Arab confrontation states on the other.

He said that the PLO hopes to maintain such close coordination, especially with Jordan, Egypt and Syria. He did not rule out the possibility of a visit to Jordan soon by Palestine President Yasir Arafat.

Asked on the PLO's stand vis-a-vis the various peace efforts, Mr. Kaddoumi said that the PLO "takes active part in these efforts because the Palestine question is the central issue in the Arab-

(Continued on page 5)

## Symbolic U.N. contingent to set up presence in Dohuk

DOHUK, Iraq (Agencies) —

The United Nations Sunday was sending a symbolic contingent of U.N. staff to the Iraqi provincial capital of Dohuk in an attempt to show thousands of Kurdish refugees it was safe to return.

Iraq has opened a road into Dohuk, apparently expecting Kurdish refugees to return soon to the city which is outside the security zone controlled by the United States and its allies.

An estimated 200,000 Kurds are waiting in the mountains of Turkey or in an overflowing refugee camp in allied-controlled northern Iraq to go back to Dohuk when they are convinced that it is safe to do so.

Kurdish guerrilla leaders have reached agreement in principle in Baghdad on a peace deal in which the government would promise to establish democracy throughout Iraq.

The main point still at issue is the size of an autonomous Kur-

dish region in the north, Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani told reporters in Baghdad Saturday.

A drive along a road leading into Dohuk from the east on Saturday showed that Iraq had removed check points into the city, which was rebel headquarters during the post-Gulf war Kurdish rebellion.

In the city's market place, Kurds checking the place out on daytime visits were not impressed.

"We will all go back to the mountains if the Americans do not come," said Ahmad Yousef, 36, as other Kurdish men around him nodded their assent.

Mr. Yousef returned to Dohuk on Saturday.

"My home is here and my family is here — that's why I came back," he said.

Asked if he felt secure after Iraq withdrew most of its troops from the city, Mr. Yousef replied: "A little bit."

Many of the Kurdish men in Dohuk market said families still in the mountains had sent one member to the city to check on property and whether it was safe to go home.

In the city's former hospital, now a derelict building, the head of a small office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), waited for 10 U.N. security men to arrive.

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## Opponents of Yemeni charter press for early general election

SANAA (R) — Opponents of united Yemen's new constitution, sensing defeat in a widely boycotted referendum on the charter, called Sunday for early general elections.

Leaders of a political coalition backed both by Muslim fundamentalists and liberal intellectuals said they believed the results of last week's two-day referendum, which had yet to be announced, did not represent the views of most Yemenis.

Diplomats predicted a 70 per cent "Yes" vote for the constitution. They said they were not aware of any vote-rigging.

No figures on the turnout in the May 15-16 poll have been released, but officials and diplomats say about 1.8 million of the four million men and women eligible to vote had registered. Most of Yemen's 11.6 million people are under 18 years old.

If the government insisted on backing the results, the coalition of 14 political parties would call for Yemen's first general elections to be held immediately rather than in 1993, its leaders told Reuters.

"We have agreed to tell the government that we believe all they have done was illegal," said Abdul Rahman Al Jifri, a southerner who heads the second-biggest opposition group, the League of Sons of Yemen. "If they insist on standing by the results ... the transition period should be ended and elections should start now instead of in 1993."

The legislative bodies of the former North Yemen and South Yemen endorsed the 128-article constitution — drawn up during merger talks in the 1970s — after the two states merged last May, ending 300 years of separation.

The unity government, evenly

## Ethiopian rebels advance on capital

NAIROBI (R) — Ethiopian rebels said Sunday they had advanced to within 90 kilometres of the capital Addis Ababa in a fresh offensive ahead of peace talks later this month.

"We have retaken the town of Ambo and advanced 15 kilometres further along the road," a spokesman for the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) told Reuters by telephone from London.

"We have the upper hand. But for the moment Addis Ababa is not our immediate objective. The aim is to paralyse government forces," spokesman Asefa Mamo said.

The rebels, battling to oust President Mengistu Haile Mariam and set up what they call a broad-based administration, first seized Ambo, 105 kilometres west of Addis Ababa, last month.

The government forces retook the town, viewed as strategic because the road from there to the capital is fairly flat and open.

Peace talks between the government, the EPRDF and two other rebel groups are set to start on May 27 in London.

But no pre-talks ceasefire was agreed and fighting between government forces and the EPRDF flared last week to the north and west of Addis Ababa.

EPRDF spokesman Asefa said that on another front further south towards Addis Ababa, the rebels were pressuring government forces around the town of Debre Sina, in North Shoa.

"We have taken the tunnel (on the road from Addis Ababa north to Debre Sina) and the troops at Debre Sina are completely surrounded," he said.

## 'Somaliland' to hold elections in 2 years

NAIROBI (R) — The government of the newly proclaimed Somaliland Republic said in a radio broadcast on Sunday that it would be an interim structure and free elections would be held in two years time.

Ceremonies have taken place at Burco, north-west Somalia, to proclaim a new state in the area which formed British Somaliland before it was merged with the adjoining Italian-administered area to form the Somali republic in 1960.

The broadcast from Hargeisa, northern Somalia, was monitored in Nairobi. Thousands attended celebrations at Burco where the flag of the new state was hoisted, the radio said.

Abdul Rahman Ahmad Ali, leader of the Somali National Movement (SNM), has been named head of the interim government.

Their main objection was to a clause in the constitution saying Sharieh would be the "main" rather than the "sole" source of law.

"The major concern of Yemen now is the Islamic faith. People are worried," said Mr. Ahmar, a member of Yemen's five-man presidential council who diplomats say commands widespread support among northern tribes.

"Eventually the results of the referendum will be 'yes' because the government has dominated the issue and is directly responsible for sorting the votes. But those who boycotted it are the majority ... it (the referendum) was a political joke."

About 25,000 demonstrators, mainly bearded men from Islamic groups, marched through the capital's main streets last Sunday to protest against the referendum. The march was organised by the opposition coalition at the urging of Muslim clerics.

SNM Central Committee Chairman Ibrahim Mayag Samatar, who spoke at Burco, said 30 years of independence had done nothing for the people of the north. Many had been killed and their property pillaged and destroyed.

"The northern people should have their own government with the aim of emerging from the problems they are facing," he said, according to the Hargeisa broadcast.

Earlier, SNM representatives in London said the decision to declare independence was taken at a meeting between leaders of the northern Somali clans. The region has been devastated by a 10-year war between SNM guerrillas and the Somali army. Hargeisa, the regional capital, is in ruins.

Former Somali President Mohammad Siad Barre fled Mogadishu in January after fierce fighting between his forces and a number of rebel groups. He is believed to be still in Somalia, protected by remnants of his army.

Most results were expected to be declared on Sunday night. They were not expected to have a direct impact on the government of President George Vassiliou elected as an independent in 1988, but will give an indication of voting trends for the presidency.

Election officials have set up 745 election centres for the 381,000 registered voters. About 700 Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in Turkish-held north Cyprus will vote in special election centres in the government-controlled south.

Voting is compulsory and offenders face a fine of up to \$1,000.

The low-key campaign was mostly on television by the six Greek Cypriot parties. It was dominated by debate on how to end the 17-year partition of the island.

Observers say frustration over lack of progress in reaching a deal with Turkey, occupying the northern third of Cyprus, has led to an increase in the number of undecided voters.

Party newspapers splashed optimistic headlines on their front pages but the non-party press hailed the subdued election cli-

## Iraq hopes to restart Amman flights soon

By P.V. Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Iraqi authorities hope to resume Iraqi Airways flights between Baghdad and Amman later this week or early next week regardless of clearance from the U.N. Sanctions Committee which monitors an international embargo, including an air blockade, on Iraq, informed sources said Saturday.

Initially, the flights between Amman and Baghdad would be used only for humanitarian purposes — carrying people who help with post-war relief efforts and for officials who are involved in implementation of United Nations resolutions on the Gulf crisis as well as journalists, said one of the sources.

The U.N. Security Council imposed the air blockade on Iraq in September, almost a month after the Aug. 2, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. However, Iraqi Airways continued to operate flights to and from Baghdad until the morning of Jan. 17, when allied bombing wreaked Baghdad airport.

Reconstruction work is under way at the airport, but the exact state of its facilities to handle incoming and outgoing flights is not known. However, Iraqi officials said in Baghdad last week that the airport could handle internal flights — to Basra in the south and Mosul in the north — if a decision was made to resume the flights.

Iraqi officials said in early May that at least two runways of Baghdad airport were almost back in shape and elementary ground-to-air communication facilities were resurrected in preparation for

the internal flights.

The U.N. Sanctions Committee has not taken up Iraq's request for permission to operate flights out of Amman, and Iraqi officials are not optimistic that it would be taken up soon.

At least four Iraqi Airways planes — moved to the Maghreb states for safety during the war — have been brought to Amman, and the head of the Iraqi national carrier was quoted as saying last week that Baghdad had sought U.N. Sanctions Committee approval for flights operating out of Amman. No comment has been made on the issue by U.N. officials.

The continued Iraqi Airways flights to Amman despite the air blockade was not vetoed by the Sanctions Committee since aircraft carrying passengers were not included in the embargo, according to one interpretation of the relevant Security Council resolution.

Furthermore, in many cases, leading statesmen and politicians seeking the release of Westerners and Japanese held in Iraq as detainees against attack were the most frequent passengers aboard the planes. Iraq freed all Westerners and Japanese in mid-December, one month before the American-led allies launched war to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait.

In the absence of air links with Baghdad, and due to the strain in relations between Iraq and Iran and Iraq and Turkey, Jordan has become the only entry point into Iraq. The distance between Amman and Baghdad is 1,000 kilometres — about 10 to 12 hours drive.

## Afghan jets halt rebel attack on Kandahar

QUETTA (R) — Heavy bombing by Afghan air force jets has halted a four-day-old guerrilla attack on the southern Afghan city of Kandahar, guerrilla sources in Pakistan said.

The Mujahedeen guerrillas suffered heavy casualties and abandoned two government posts which they seized near Kandahar airport at the start of the offensive on Wednesday, the sources in the southwestern Pakistani town of Quetta said.

A rebel commander, Abdus Samad Wakil, said the Mujahedeen were holding on to Kragh and Rozgan, two areas they had captured near Kandahar, Afghanistan's second city.

But a spokesman for the Ittehad-i-Islami party of the Pakistan-based guerrilla government of Prime Minister Abdurrahman Sayyaf said the Mujahedeen had difficulty in locating mines laid around Kandahar by government forces.

Civilians have left their houses in many areas near Kandahar on Mujahedeen advice to escape being hit by guerrilla artillery or government bombing, spokesman Baz Mohammad said.

About 100 Afghan families fleeing the fighting have arrived at the Pakistani border town of Chaman, Pakistani officials said.

Officials also said Afghan jets searching for rebels violated Pakistani airspace on Friday and Saturday but did not attack any target.

Afghan Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil sent a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar on Thursday accusing the Pakistani army of an "open invasion" of Kandahar province.

## MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

### Maghreb summit to be held in Tripoli

ALGIERS (R) — A summit of five North African states will be held in Libya in June to try to heal rifts in the Arab World following the Gulf conflict, Algerian Foreign Minister Sid Ahmed Ghazali said. "In early June we will meet in Tripoli at summit level to discuss initiatives by the Maghreb states to close Arab ranks," he said in a broadcast on Saturday night. The date had not yet been fixed but diplomatic sources said it would be held in the first week of June. Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qaddafi is the current chairman of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) composed of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Mr. Ghazali said when he attended an Arab League meeting in Cairo earlier this month he found the Arab states were still in a state of shock after the Gulf war. "The atmosphere of inter-Arab relations is still impregnated by the war. The wounds are still deep but everyone is attached to preserving the Arab future," he said, commenting on the Cairo meeting at which the Arab League's new secretary-general, Emad Abdul Meguid of Egypt, was elected. Mr. Ghazali said the Maghreb states were among the few countries able to mediate between all the members and thus play a role in healing the rifts between the 21 members of the Arab League. An AMU summit was last held in March in Tripoli in the absence of King Hassan of Morocco who wanted more time to study the consequences of the Gulf conflict.

### Moroccan army faces new role — king

RABAT (R) — Morocco's armed forces face a new mission in the approach to a referendum on Western Sahara, King Hassan told military commanders on Saturday. Returning from a trip to the phosphate-rich desert territory, the king met senior officers in the southern town of Tantan and said the army's role would "change from an operational to an organisational phase." He said the new role "implies constancy in mobilisation and perseverance in vigilance" for the 200,000 strong armed forces, which fought Polisario guerrillas in Western Sahara for nearly 15 years after Spain ended its colonial rule with no agreement on who would take over. "Basically it gives priority to political action, devoted to arbitration of law and international legality, which will determine the holding of an uncontested referendum," the king said. A U.N.-supervised vote will give Saharans the choice next year between independence and integration with Morocco. No serious fighting has been reported since November 1989 when Polisario and Morocco accepted the referendum plan.

### Saudi Arabia to build another camp

NICOSIA (R) — Saudi Arabia said Saturday it was building another camp in the northern town of Rafah for Iraqi refugees. Military commander Prince Khaled Ben Sultan said journalists would be able to visit the site late next week, the Saudi Press Agency reported. The first camp at Rafah had a capacity of 30,000. The Iraqis are Gulf war prisoners who refuse to go home and opponents of the government who fled the collapse of post-war unrest.

### Last Briton in Mogadishu killed

NAIROBI (R) — An armed gang has killed engineer Brian Bowden, the last Briton left in the Somali capital Mogadishu after months of fighting between rebels and government forces, Mogadishu Radio reported. The radio, monitored in Nairobi, said the gang raided Mr. Bowden's house early on Saturday and stole gold, money and food after killing him. Mr. Bowden had lived in Somalia for 33 years. After working in the northern province of Hargeisa, he moved in 1988 to Mogadishu where he worked for the British Overseas Development Administration on a project to monitor the tsetse fly. After the British ambassador and his staff pulled out last January because of the fighting which ousted President Mohammad Siad Barre, Bowden looked after the embassy premises. He had not left Somalia since 1968.

### Greece protests to Turkey

ATHENS (R) — Greece has protested to Turkey, accusing its warplanes of buzzing a commercial aircraft over the Aegean Sea, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Sunday. The protest, delivered in Athens and Ankara late on Saturday, said a pass by two Turkish Phantom fighters rocked a twin-propeller Olympic Aviation Island commuter plane on Friday and frightened its 28 passengers and crew. The spokesman said the protest accused the Turkish aircraft of violating Greek airspace, performing dangerous manoeuvres near an airport and intentionally harassing the plane flying from Athens to the island of Limnos. Greece scrambled Mirage fighters to chase off the Turkish planes. The two NATO allies came close to war over mineral rights in the Aegean Sea 1987. Relations are marred by numerous other disputes, including the treatment of a Muslim minority in Greece's western Thrace area and the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974.

### French soldier killed in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — A French soldier was killed and another was injured when their vehicle crashed in southeastern Turkey, an allied statement said. It said the accident happened on Saturday on the road between the towns of Batman and Midyat. The names of the soldiers were withheld until their families were informed. About 2,000 French soldiers are among 20,500 troops from nine nations helping half a million mainly Kurdish refugees return home to northern Iraq from Turkish border camps.

### Omani leader arrives in S. Arabia

NICOSIA (R) — Sultan Qaboos Ben Said of Oman arrived in Saudi Arabia on Sunday, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. It said he was received at the airport by King Fahd, Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz and Saudi officials. The agency said the sultan would spend several days in the kingdom. It gave no other details. Earlier on Sunday, the agency said the Omani leader's visit came in the framework of efforts to achieve a united Arab stand, serving the aims of the Arab and Islamic nations. "Sultan Qaboos' visit today represents a new departure in the (Omani-Saudi) relations of cooperation, understanding and coordination serving the interests of the two nations... and the Arab and Islamic worlds," the SPA report said.

### QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06) 53200-5, where it should always be verified.

### ARRIVALS

#### Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:20 Dharan (RJ)

10:15 Jeddah, Sanaa (RJ)

10:45 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

11:15 Larnaca, Damascus (RJ)

17:30 Al-Bashir, J. Arafat (RJ)

19:00 Ryad (RJ)

21:00 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)

22:00 Dhahran (RJ)

23:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

23:30 Cairo (MS)

00:00 Dhahran (RJ)

00:30 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

01:00 Cairo (MS)

01:30 Dhahran (RJ)

02:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

02:30 Cairo (MS)

03:00 Dhahran (RJ)

03:30 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

04:00 Cairo (MS)

04:30 Dhahran (RJ)

05:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

05:30 Cairo (MS)

06:00 Dhahran (RJ)

06:30 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

07:00 Cairo (MS)

07:30 Dhahran (RJ)

08:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

08:30 Cairo (MS)

09:00 Dhahran (RJ)

09:30 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

## Total foreign currency reserves stand at \$1 billion — Nabulsi

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The "real" foreign exchange reserves held by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) have risen to \$500 million — representing about two and a half months' of national imports — and the bank is confident that the amount could soon be raised to represent three to four months' of imports. CBJ Governor Mohammad Saeed Al Nabulsi said Saturday.

The total reserves in foreign currency available to the CBJ are about \$1 billion — including a 35 per cent mandatory transfer to the Central Bank by all commercial banks of deposits with them in foreign currency, Dr. Nabulsi told Jordan Television in an interview.

The exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar remains stable and there is no ground to fear any devaluation of the currency, the CBJ governor told interviewer Rami Khouri in the weekly "Encounter" broadcast Saturday evening.

According to the governor, the reduction of the country's balance of payments was a result of the "developments" in the region, including the Gulf crisis, rather than the economic restructuring programme agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The foreign exchange reserves held by the CBJ "are very reasonable," he said pointing out that Jordan's monthly imports were estimated at around \$200 million and therefore the "real reserves" represent two and a half months' of imports.

Dr. Nabulsi, who took the helm of the Central Bank under a special mandate from His Majesty King Hussein in mid-1989 as the country's economy was facing an unprecedented crisis, said the dinar was "overvalued for over 35 years" before it took a plunge against the American dollar in 1988 and early 1989 as foreign exchange reserves dipped to "almost \$200 million minus."

A series of steps adopted since then by the Central Bank, under the guidance of Dr. Nabulsi, included curbs on foreign transfers, on spending in foreign currency, and new import procedures.

The CBJ governor described as "small and narrow" the parallel (black) market of foreign currency in Jordan noting that almost all parallel market dealings were in banknotes and that the Central Bank continued to be the sole channel through which imports are regularised. He noted that the parallel market rates were in fact less than those offered by the Central Bank.

The governor said the CBJ was still awaiting Parliament to discuss new legislation designed to allow private sector moneychanging operations, which were shut down in February 1989.

## Soft drink prices go up

AMMAN (Petra) — Supply Minister Ibrahim Ayyoub Sunday raised the prices of soft drinks, produced locally, by almost 11.7 per cent as of Monday May 20.

According to the new decision, a soft drink bottle of 250 millilitre capacity will be sold to consumers for 100 fils, up from 85 fils. A box containing 24 recoverable bottles will be sold for JD 2.230. Bottles of one litre each will be sold for 370 fils, while the 12 bottles box will be sold for JD 4.250.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

### EXHIBITION

★ Art exhibition by Nazir Ismail at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of etchings, lithographs and monoprints, by Ahmad Nawash and Yasser Duweik at Abdin Hameed Shoman Foundation (10 a.m. — 5 p.m.)

### FILM

★ French film entitled "Melo" at the French Cultural Centre — 8:00 p.m.

Jordan Times  
Tel: 667171



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday addresses a gathering organised by the London-based Medical Aid for Palestinians (Petra photo)

## Prince Hassan lauds MAP

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has voiced appreciation to various private organisations which are extending help to the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation and he singled out in particular the London-based Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) for its remarkable endeavours in this respect.

In an address at an annual ceremony organised by MAP Saturday evening, the Crown Prince referred to the miserable conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and said that there was need to facilitate the "access of Arab voice to the outside world in a language well understood by the modern world community."

Referring to the plight of the Palestinians, the Prince said that during the 40 day Gulf war the Palestinians in the occupied lands had sustained at least \$250 million in economic losses as their life was paralysed by curfews and repression.

Israel, he said, now occupies 65 per cent of the total Arab land owned by the Arab people of Palestine, depriving the Arabs of their own property and livelihood.

On May 10 Prince Hassan

patronised a MAP walk to raise funds for the Palestinians living under Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. At least 4,500 people participated in the walk in a bid to raise at least JD 200,000 in donations from the public, according to MAP Director in Jordan Nadia Al Alami.

The walk of May 10, Prince Hassan said at the ceremony, was not confined to the Palestinian dimension, but exceeded it to reflect an all out Jordanian solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

Referring to the rights of the Palestinian people, the Crown Prince said that as the Soviet Jews are being allowed to emigrate to Palestine and as people around the world speak about equal rights in the spirit of the Helsinki agreement the Palestinians are being deprived of their basic human rights in their own homeland.

He said that poverty and hunger were reaching new, serious dimensions in Palestine, and he urged various organisations and peace activists to step up their efforts to help reestablish and ensure the rights of the Palestinians in their homeland.

MAP board Chairman in Jordan Abdul Majid Shoman re-

viewed the organisation's activities and its services to the Palestinians inside and outside the occupied territories.

Another prominent speaker was Dr. Pauline Cutting who works as a surgeon in Al Ahli Hospital, in occupied Gaza, set up by MAP to help the Palestinian people injured in the ongoing intifada.

Dr. Cutting outlined MAP's services to the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and in Lebanon and voiced the organisation's deep appreciation of Jordan's support.

In an interview with the Jordan Times last week, Dr. Cutting said that the people of the occupied territories are more and more in need as economic pressure gives way to poverty and ill health. During the last three years, Dr. Cutting said the number of injuries and deaths exceeded 100,000, with some of the injuries causing permanent disability to people.

MAP is trying to increase and expand its services to the Palestinian people. So far, she said, has set up clinics and is providing surgeons and nurses to offer free service to the injured Palestinians.

their ties with one another and with the department of culture.

He said that the children would be selected through the ministry's "Wisam Magazine" issued in cooperation with the private schools and those of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). A special committee will be set up to select the winners and to distribute special merit certificates and gifts to those with unique productions.

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein received at the Royal Court Sunday the visiting Iranian parliamentary delegation led by Ahmad Uzeizi and exchanged views with them about regional and international issues as well as Iranian-Jordanian relations.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, and the Iranian charge d'affaires in Amman.

The Iranian parliamentary delegation Sunday also had a meeting with Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri with whom they reviewed Jordanian-Iranian ties and issues of mutual concern.

Iran's position with regard to the Palestine question and the plight of the Palestinian people as well as other issues in the Middle East region, in the wake of the Gulf crisis, were the main topics for discussion earlier Sunday by Jordanian and Iranian parlia-

mentarians. Heading the Jordanian side was Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat who thanked the Iranian government for its effort to convene an international parliamentary conference to discuss the Palestine question.

"In fact the Palestine question serves as a common denominator for all parliaments, especially those of the Islamic World and the views of parliamentarians are of paramount importance," said Dr. Arabiyat at the meeting attended by the members of the visiting Iranian parliamentary delegation.

The head of the Iranian team, Ahmad Uzeizi, said in a statement upon arrival here Friday that he was sounding out views of parliaments in the Islamic countries about the proposed conference.

Dr. Arabiyat told the Iranian

delegation that Jordan viewed this conference with great interest because parliamentarians represented the people of the world in general, but the Islamic nations should promote the idea of the conference since their people constituted one fifth of the world's population.

Mr. Uzeizi, who handed Dr. Arabiyat a message from his Iranian counterpart Mehdi Karroubi, extended an invitation to the House speaker to visit Iran.

Later Sunday the delegation left for Syria through the border post of Ramtha. In a departure statement the delegation head described the visit to Jordan as good and successful.

He said that the Lower House of Parliament welcomed the Iranian proposal to hold an international conference for Muslim parliamentarians to discuss the Palestine question.



## Symposium to tackle danger of smoking

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Anti-Smoking Society Sunday announced that a symposium on the hazards of smoking on public life would be held early next month under the slogan: "Towards creating public places and public transport free of smoking."

Member Tawfiq Al Azzeh made the announcement following a preparatory meeting by society members to decide on the events that will be organised to help spread awareness among members of the public against the dangers of smoking.

He told a press conference at the Professional Association Complex that the symposium would be organised in cooperation with the Health Ministry, the

General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), and other government and private institutions, and it would tackle all aspects of the dangers of smoking to the public health.

The last such symposium in Jordan was held in November of last year when it was announced that 70 per cent of the Jordanian adults were in the habit of smoking and that there was need to reduce the number in view of Jordan's requirements to have more food produced on the land now cultivated with tobacco.

According to Mr. Azzeh, smoking in Jordan has been on the increase, he estimated the total sum of money spent on cigarettes in the country at JD 70 million annually. "These sums

could be spent on health matters and social welfare instead of smoking which is very harmful to man," said Mr. Azzeh in his press statement.

Mr. Azzeh said that smokers around the world are estimated to be spending \$100 billion annually on cigarettes and tobacco.

In his statement, Mr. Azzeh reviewed a number of working papers to be discussed by the symposium, which, he said, will be preceded by a programme designed to warn the public against smoking.

He said that the society Monday would embark on the implementation of the public awareness programme, which, among other things, will include showing documentary films and slides.

## Week dedicated to children

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Culture and Youth has announced plans for week-long activities for children in Jordan with the purpose of giving children with creative skills further incentives to work in art and culture.

A statement here said that the ministry would host a group of distinguished children who had produced remarkable story and poetry writings, paintings and drawings and oratory skills for a whole week in August.

According to the announcement, the children will be involved in cultural, recreational and touristic activities and will take part in an exhibition of

## War risk insurance cancelled

AMMAN (Petra) — The Customs Department has cancelled fees on war risk insurance, which was collected by insurance companies from ships heading for Aqaba. The war insurance fee was taxable, according to the customs law, and therefore fees imposed on ships heading for Jordan were added to the gross value of imported products, for the purpose of collecting customs duties.

Now, since the situation in the region has stabilised, the war risk insurance was cancelled, thus leaving no legal grounds for collecting additional customs duties, officials said.

Munir Al Hour, director of the Cultural Department at the Ministry of Culture and Youth, said that the week-long functions aimed at encouraging children to come up with further writings and at opening the way for children in various governorates to enhance

their ties with one another and with the department of culture.

He said that the children would be selected through the ministry's "Wisam Magazine" issued in cooperation with the private schools and those of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). A special committee will be set up to select the winners and to distribute special merit certificates and gifts to those with unique productions.

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# Jordan Times

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## Pullout — where to?

AS EGYPT began to withdraw its troops from the Gulf Sunday in compliance with President Hosni Mubarak's decision to pull out completely from that region, the Damascus declaration hangs in the balance. It will be recalled that the declaration stipulated that Egypt and Syria would provide the military muscle of the joint security force envisaged to protect the Arab Gulf from any external threat. In return, Cairo and Damascus would have received generous economic and financial assistance in recognition of their important contributions to the defence of the region. The question that looms in the horizon is whether the Damascus declaration is already defunct, and if so why. Although the Egyptian president did not explain his decision to withdraw all of Egypt's 36,000 soldiers by August of this year, there is little doubt that he acted out of disappointment with the new posture of the Arab Gulf states which seems to prefer the deployment of Western troops to Arab armies. The first signal that all is not alright for the Egyptian army was when it was left with no specific assignment to perform. This non-benign neglect of the Egyptian contingent came in the midst of new reports that Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states will rely more on the U.S. and other Western forces to defend them in the future. These second thoughts by the six members of the GCC obviously precipitated the Egyptian decision to leave the area before they are asked to.

Such a development is likely to affect the future of the Arab Order and even the so-called new world order. If even Cairo and Damascus can no longer be trusted to participate in the defense of the oil-rich Gulf countries after the posture they had assumed during the Gulf crisis, then all not can be well for them. One big problem here is that at a time when Egyptian and Syrian soldiers are being ushered out — albeit politely — of the Gulf region, non-Arab forces are being encouraged to assume a bigger regional role in the defence of the Gulf states. No one would want to quarrel with the proposition to integrate Iran into the Gulf regional security planning, since it is an important regional power. But to invite Tehran and other foreign countries in at a time when Cairo and Damascus are excluded is a lopsided logic at best. This new episode casts stronger doubts about the way the Gulf crisis was rectified. If the Kuwaiti conflict had shaken the confidence of the Arab countries in themselves, its resolution at the hands of non-Arab nations should have reflected hope and conviction in the ability of the Arabs to solve their problems by themselves. Foreign armies can never have the ultimate interests of the Gulf Arab states at heart. They will be there to defend first and foremost their own national interests and objectives. Would it not have been infinitely more functional and wiser therefore to maintain Arab troops to defend the regional security of the Arab Gulf states? The only possible consolation in this otherwise dismal state of Arab affairs is that the GCC states have yet to recover from the ordeal which was set in motion by the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq. When the dust settles in the Gulf region, there will be every hope that there will be no need for any foreign armies in the Gulf region, be they Arab or non-Arab, and that some new order can be formulated by the Arabs themselves.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday commented on Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's negative attitude towards the U.S. administration's bid to achieve a settlement to the Middle East conflict and said that Shamir realises too well that Washington is capable of imposing its will on the Jewish state. Shamir realises that it was the United States that formed a military alliance against Iraq and launched aggression on that Arab country destroying its infrastructure and military capability, and not the United Nations which lacks such power, the paper noted. Shamir also realises that it is because of the United States' power that Iraq remains under siege and its people continue to suffer; and is in the power of the United States to impose its strong will and force the Zionist state to comply with the international legitimacy and U.N. Security Council resolutions, the paper added. Shamir, the paper continued, can continue to decide his rejection of U.N. Security Council resolutions and the bids for a just peace, and he realises too well that had it not been for Washington's backing to his policies and to Israel's expansionist programme, the Jewish state would soon crumble. So far the Arab states have been led to believe that the U.S. administration is oriented towards a lasting settlement in the Middle East region, and therefore failure of success lies squarely with Washington, the paper noted. What should President Bush fail to bring about the long awaited settlement despite Israel's intransigence, his political future and the credibility of his American nation would be facing humiliation and defeat at the hands of world Zionism.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily warns of the danger of the possible suffering of the members of the public should they suddenly find themselves without bread as a result of a continuing dispute between the Ministry of Labour and the bakers union. Nazib says that citizens, whether rich or poor are looking on helplessly, witnessing the dispute getting heated everyday, and fearing that one day bakers would stop functioning due to the new labour regulations. For, as the ministry insists that there is no justification to exempt bakers from labour laws which stipulate that non-Jordanian workers should not be employed in bakeries, the bakers union contends that the exemption is necessary because of the lack of sufficient numbers of Jordanians who would want to work under conditions currently existing at the bakeries, notes the writer. He says that the bakers insist that the Ministry of Labour continue to employ non-Jordanians for lesser pay than the Jordanians so as to ensure that the price of bread remain the same, but the ministry insists that its laws should be respected at all costs. Of course the ordinary citizens can only hope that the dispute will end soon and peacefully so that bread can continue to be available for all, he adds. He says people hope the ministry will soon reach a settlement so that there can be no new hardship for them:

## Weekly Political Pulse

# King's vision prevails

THERE is no doubt that His Majesty King Hussein has emerged very strong from the Gulf crisis after having associated himself so closely with public sentiment on that conflict on both sides of Jordan River. Although the King lost in his quest for a peaceful solution to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, he nevertheless won the hearts and admiration of Jordanians and Palestinians alike. He is now riding on a crescendo of public support across the political spectrum in the country as well as in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. One would venture to maintain that the monarch has indeed become a very popular leader who had put Arab honour and interests before everything else including the immediate national interests of the Kingdom. The King could have realised infinite political and economic gains had he opted for an expedient policy and joined forces with the "winning" team in the Gulf conflict. To have withstood all the temptation to link up with what appeared so clearly the winning side in order to uphold an ideal that he so vehemently believed in, King Hussein has earned long lasting dividends that he may now cash in on them.

With the prospects of holding a peace conference on the Arab-Israeli conflicts looming on the horizon, the King's popularity can be used as a launching pad for bold initiatives that may unleash the peace process from its present stagnating position. No one can now dare question the sincerity of the King or his dedication to the Palestinian cause after he has successfully demonstrated his proven credentials as a great Arab leader and as a man of principles and high ideals. Among the immediate

consequences of King Hussein's rising popularity is his ability to capture the full confidence of the Palestinian people under occupation. Notwithstanding Amman's 1989 decision to sever all legal and administrative relations with the West Bank, there are still enough relations between the two banks to warrant the continuation of the coordination and cooperation between them at all levels and in many areas. The reservoir of goodwill that was generated by the King's adventure on the side of principle and idealism during the Gulf crisis has obviously beefed up the residual relations between the two peoples across the Jordan River and placed them on an even higher plateau.

In the wake of His Majesty King Hussein's talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker few days ago, the King emerged more forthcoming on Jordan's role in the search for peace in the Middle East than before. The monarch's upbeat on the prospects for peace between Israel and the Arab side was reflected in many words that he had uttered at the conclusion of his exchange of views with Baker which in their cumulative sense portray self-confidence and positive reflection. After saying in so many words that the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflicts have wasted so much time till now and that they should avoid quibbling over semantical issues, King Hussein sent one signal after the other that time is propitious for a real movement forward in the direction of peace in the area. King Hussein must have had in mind the many lost opportunities in the past in the quest for a lasting and honourable peace between the Arabs and Israel. This

time around, the King reasoned, no stone must be left unturned to wage a daring peace effort.

Had King Hussein been so blunt about the prospects for peace in the Middle East prior to the Gulf crisis, he would have been put under a closer microscopic attention and scrutiny by the peoples of Jordan and Palestine. This time, however, the King has smothered with heaps of praise and support from all Arab quarters including his own peoples on both sides of the Jordan River for faithfully expressing their sentiments on the issues of war and peace in the region.

Does this mean that Jordan is once again in the driver's seat in the peace process? I think yes, provided one keeps in mind that Amman has no intention whatsoever to prompt the Palestinian role as exemplified by the PLO. Rather Jordan aims to bolster the Palestinian dimension by joining forces with it in a more forceful and confident manner instead of the timid manner that has characterised its posture in the last few years. In other words, Jordan is beginning to flex its muscles once again after regaining confidence and faith in its course. No one can dare lecture King Hussein now on what is honourable and what is not after having lectured all including the mighty on such subjects. In conclusion, Jordan is now imbued with renewed energy on all fronts and can be expected to make its weight and word better heard and felt. This metamorphosis in the country augurs well for the peace process and its dividends can be collected in the course of the coming months.

## Gen. Powell was right

By Anthony Lewis

WASHINGTON — Time and human disaster had already cast increasing doubt on President Bush's decision to go to war against Iraq. Now the doubts have further weight. For it appears that Gen. Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, opposed the president's course.

So we are told in a new book by Bob Woodward of The Washington Post. He reports that General Powell favoured economic and military pressures on Iraq, arguing that they would in time force Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait without war.

The knowledge that a military man as universally respected as General Powell advised against the war will surely strengthen the view, held now by a minority of Americans, that the war was unwise. At minimum it will be harder to brand opponents as unpatriotic, as some Republicans have done.

Mr. Woodward's book, "The Commanders," uses his familiar technique of describing behind-the-scenes events in a matter-of-fact narrative, without identifying his sources. Like others, I have my doubts about that method. But here it has the ring of authority. The words and views ascribed to General Powell and other high

officials fit what is known otherwise and sound authentic.

President Bush set the course for war when he announced on Nov. 8 that he was doubling the number of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. Just before that, according to the book, General Powell had argued to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and then to the president himself for an alternative strategy of containment.

Why did Mr. Bush reject that advice? The book offers no definitive answer to that crucial question, and Mr. Woodward tells us that he was not able to interview the president. But he quotes the president as telling General Powell: "I don't think there's time politically for that strategy."

What that meant turns on whether Mr. Bush, if he spoke those exact words, was using "politically" in an international or domestic sense. He might have meant that he thought the international coalition against Saddam Hussein would not hold together long enough to let sanctions and other pressures work. Or he might have meant that a long-haul strategy would not be popular with American voters.

The war option proved immensely popular. It sent Mr. Bush up to record figures in the polls and dispatched the critics who had called him indecisive

and weak. That result echoed the precedents of Grenada and Panama.

One unanswered question about the Persian Gulf crisis has been whether U.S. intelligence predicted the invasion of Kuwait. Mr. Woodward says the Defense Intelligence Agency did, issuing a warning on July 31. He says that Secretary of Defense Cheney rejected that and a further urgent warning the next day, saying that the Iraqi troop buildup was a bluff.

But once Iraq invaded on Aug.

2, the book says, President Bush was consistently hawkish. It says that on Aug. 3 he ordered the Central Intelligence Agency to begin planning to covert operations to overthrow Saddam Hussein, and formally authorised such operations on Aug. 15.

General Powell is described as having been distressed when the president took steps towards war without consulting him or having a discussion at a National Security Council meeting. One such occasion was when Mr. Bush said on Aug. 5 that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait "will not stand." That

implied a sharp escalation of objective, from preventing an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia to undoing the aggression on Kuwait. The book says General Powell learned of it by watching the president on television.

Once President Bush had really made his decision for war, by late November, General Powell reluctantly supported the policy. He and the president will no doubt now resist efforts to divide them. But the war strategy is going to be seen in a different light.

Would a containment strategy in fact have forced Saddam Hus-

## Morocco opens arms to tourists

By Alan George

SAID Boukraa, one of the managers at the sumptuous Mamounia Casino, is not a happy man. But he is a little happier than he was in January and February, when business was no more than two per cent of its normal level for the time of year.

Over drinks in the cavernous and largely deserted gaming hall, Mr. Boukraa explained. The first to go were the French, he recalled. Relations between Rabat and Paris were poisoned last year by the publication in France of *Notre Ami Le Roi*, a book which lambasts King Hassan and his regime. Then, Danielle Mitterrand, the wife of the French president, angered Morocco by announcing plans to visit Western Saharan refugee camps in the southern Algerian town of Tindouf. Under intense pressure from Rabat, Madame Mitterrand backed down, although she did meet the wife of the Polisario Front's secretary general in Paris.

At the same time, reports appeared claiming that Morocco was being swept by cholera. There were indeed about 100 cases, mainly in Fez and Meknes, linked to poor sanitation, but Moroccans insist that claims of an epidemic were grossly exaggerated. Another blow to tourism was struck in December, when street demonstrations against rising prices and unemployment exploded into rioting in northern towns.

The Gulf war was the last straw. In Morocco, there was wide sympathy for Iraq and opposition to Rabat's membership of the anti-Baghdad coalition. But many Moroccans jumped aboard the pro-Iraq bandwagon, mainly because the crisis offered a new stick with which to beat their government, whose real sin was not its support for Washington but its handling of the local economy. Moreover, there is widespread distaste here for the personal profligacy of the Gulf princes. It was felt that the

few and far between.

It has been the same at the nearby Ramuntcho hotel and restaurant, managed by a French lady who 15 years ago escaped the wear and tear of life in Paris to settle in Marrakesh. The cuisine is exquisite and the prices moderate, but the restaurant has been all but deserted. Forty kilometres to the south west, at the skiing resort of Oukaimeden, 2,650 metres above sea level, the slopes have had plenty of snow, but few foreign skiers.

If the hoteliers, tourist guides, taxi drivers and street entertainers were worried, so too were the international bankers who manage Morocco's \$21 billion foreign debt. This year, capital and interest payments are expected to total \$2.6bn. Tourism is a pillar of the economy, earning hard currency revenues of about \$1bn. annually. Before the Gulf crisis, the industry was performing well. In the first seven months of 1990, tourist revenues totalled \$645m — 13 per cent higher than in the same period of 1989. According to one well placed banker, however, tourist receipts will fall by as much as \$400m this year. If the tourism slump persists into summer, the figure will be even higher.

Fortunately for the Moroccans, however, it looks as if the tourists are returning, albeit hesitantly. In the run-up to Easter, Spanish groups were visiting the sites of Marrakesh. Further south, at the seaside resort of Agadir, Scandinavians and Germans were trickling back.

Whatever Morocco's mood at the height of the Gulf crisis, there is scant evidence now of sympathy for Saddam Hussein. In Marrakesh, the Iraqi president's bloody battle for survival is the subject of much interest. But a far greater pre-occupation is how to revive the tourist trade. Whatever doubts there might be about Western policy in the Gulf, Westerners are being welcomed with open arms — Middle East International, London.

## Nigeria's number two cracks whip on civilian rule

By John Owen-Davies  
Reuter

KANO, Nigeria — A white-robed man with piercing eyes emerges from the crowd at a ceremony in Kano and bellows at Vice President Augustus Aikhomu in the Hausa language of predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria.

Aikhomu, from the mainly Christian south, smiles after a translator whispers that the words uttered by the "praise singer" paid to reflect the mood of local people, are good.

Everyone, including soldiers and police, relaxes as strains of a band playing "He's got the whole world in his hands" dominate a lull in proceedings.

Aikhomu, a deep-voiced retired admiral, was visiting Kano after a week of Christian-Muslim violence that claimed up to 400 lives in neighbouring Bauchi state.

The *Punishing* three-day trip, during which he inaugurated government buildings and water schemes, was designed to take the political pulse of the people and push the military government's plans for a return to civilian rule in October next year.

Aikhomu, 51, mixes military toughness with geniality during his duties as front man for President Ibrahim Babangida on overseeing state administrations and the power transition.

"Any further religious disturbances will be put down firmly," he said on day one, referring to the worst religious rioting to hit Africa's most populous country since the early 1980s.

The government has said it is determined that such violence will not obstruct the path to civilian rule, which started in earnest last December when two government-created parties

fought nationwide local elections.

Speaking calmly at a new official building complex, Aikhomu later warned newly-formed local government not to abuse the authority invested in them and create states within states.

Aikhomu also plays a leading role on the economy, especially in pursuing austerity programmes introduced five years ago after a plunge in world oil prices prompted Nigeria from boom to near bust.

"He is a fatherly figure who seeks to get things done without hurting people," added Iboror, an independent journalist who was jailed under a harsh anti-press decree introduced by Buhari and later repealed by Babangida.

Another journalist, who follows Aikhomu for his newspaper, said: "He is performing creditably. He is very humane and there is no whiff of scandal around him, at least that I know of."

In an interview with Reuters, Aikhomu said the transition process was on course and that he believed another military coup was unlikely.

"This is the first time in the history of this country that a meaningful intervention by the military had meaningful objectives, both economic and political," he said.

Some commentators say there is no guarantee that the army, which sees itself as protector of the constitution, will remain in barracks after the transition if the third republic fails to meet the military's aspirations for the country.

The prospect of bowing out of public life next year appeals to Aikhomu, a former chief of general staff and a cadet in the early 1950s at Britain's Dartmouth naval college.

"I will take a well-deserved holiday with my family, but serving with government has given me a different appreciation of the problems of this country," said Aikhomu, who is married and has two sons and four daughters.

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## PLO, Arab states may meet

(Continued from page 1)

contributing towards a solution, but the United States is rejecting such approach under Israeli influence."

"It has been proved that the European nations are incapable of exercising pressure so that their participation in the coming conference can be real and active and perhaps they would attend in an observer status," Mr. Kadoum said.

"By experience we have learnt a great deal with regard to the

European stands, but we consider the position of Europe, including the Soviet Union, as friendly," he said.

The PLO official also said a decision by the Saudi-led Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to send an observer to a U.S.-proposed peace conference had damaged Arab interests.

"This decision was taken without our knowledge," Mr. Kadoum told reporters.

"This is a card that serves the interests of others and not the Arabs," said Mr. Kadoum.

## 'No escape from U.N. resolutions'

(Continued from page 1) more areas of agreement than disagreement despite continuing differences on the shape of the peace talks.

Official Syrian newspapers on Sunday repeated demands for a U.N. role in any peace talks and stressed Syria's key position in achieving a settlement.

"Israel knows more than any one else that it is impossible to

ignore Syria..." the official daily Tishreen said in an apparent reference to hints from Israel that a peace conference might be held without Damascus.

The U.S. administration's credibility is now being tested and its support for justice would prove that no force could defeat international legitimacy and that no peace could be achieved with (Israeli) occupation."

## Kuwait begins summary trials

(Continued from page 1)

Sabti Jumaa got 12 years for helping the Iraqis and theft. This was also fined 200 dinars (almost \$600) for possessing Iraqi bullets. The help they gave the Iraqis was not specified.

Iraqi Sabah Hassan Ahmad Shamsi was given a total 13 years for helping the Iraqi forces and possessing firearms.

Shamsi told the judges that much of his confession was extracted by torture. He said he only got to know Iraqi occupation forces after paying an 8,000 dinar (\$24,000) bribe to get his brother out of jail.

Two men sentenced in absentia were Ahmad Hassan Miri, an Iraqi, given a 3½ year sentence as an 40-dinar (\$120) fine for collaborating and possessing ammunition, and Jihad Mohammad Daoud, a Jordanian, ordered jailed for five years.

Among those acquitted of alleged collaboration with Iraq was an Egyptian, Azouz Mohammad Azouz.

Azouz had been charged for allowing a group of Iraqi shoe merchants to stay in his house overnight after they ate in the restaurant where he worked and told him they could not find an empty hotel room.

Preliminary hearings were begun into the nine other cases but these were postponed until later this month or June.

One of the accused, charged

with aiding the enemy, admitted he had fired an Iraqi soldier's gun in the air in the Arab style of celebration. But he maintained he was celebrating the Iraqi decision, as U.S.-led coalition forces approached, to withdraw from Kuwait, not its occupation of the emirate.

No Kuwaiti civilians attended the proceedings, which were watched by U.S. and British diplomats and a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Western governments have told Kuwait's government they are concerned about reports of human rights abuses, especially against Palestinians who formed the backbone of economic life before the Iraqis invaded last August.

Kuwaitis are bitter about the support given to Iraq during the Gulf crisis by the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Many in the 200,000-member Palestinian community — about half its pre-invasion strength — say they are still victims of a witchhunt, despite official concern about Kuwaitis taking the law into their own hands.

Kuwaiti officials said three Jordanians were found innocent.

Collaboration can carry the death sentence by public hanging if state security is judged to have been threatened and in cases of sabotage and espionage. None faced those counts on Sunday.

## Palestinians appeal to U.N.

(Continued from page 1)

said: "The expulsion decision is aimed at fulfilling the Zionists' chauvinistic dream of driving the Palestinians out of their land."

In Damascus, Palestinian groups called for sanctions and other punitive measures against Israel.

Spokesmen for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and Fatah Uprising said the expulsions demonstrated that Israel had no respect for international law.

Khaled Al Fahoum, chairman of an alliance of four other Palestinian groups that are opposed to the leadership of the PLO, urged Palestinians to escalate their uprising in the occupied territories.

"The expulsion illustrates Israel's violation of all human rights laws. This requires us to escalate the uprising despite all Israeli repressive measures," said Mr. Fahoum, a former speaker of the Palestine National Council.

"We salute our masses in the Israeli-occupied territories and tell them that freedom has a big price," he said.

PFLP spokesman Omar Khatib called on international human rights organisations to "respect their pledges and take action to protect the Palestinian people from the criminal Israeli measures."

"These actions contradict all human and moral values and constitute a violation of international laws and conventions," Mr. Khatib said.

A DFLP spokesman said the Israeli action "showed that the United States of America was paying no attention to Israel's violation of human rights in the occupied territories."

"It also showed that the double-standard policy is still existing in Washington towards people of the world and the violation of human rights."

He called for "an immediate Security Council meeting to adopt firm sanctions against Israel because of its new measures and because it ignored the council's previous resolutions."

## From death zones to a vision of the new Europe

By Omar Sattar

ONCE they were "death zones" — stretches of man's land separating the former Eastern bloc countries from each other and from the West, occupied only by guard dogs and soldiers.

With the tearing down of the iron curtain the zones, totalling more than 2 million hectares (5 million acres), are being promoted by conservationists as the building-blocks of a new ecologically sound Europe.

For more than 45 years these borderlands have been untouched by industry or agriculture.

They have evolved into natural wildlife sanctuaries, containing plants and animals extinct elsewhere in Europe.

Unless action is taken now to preserve these examples of Europe's nature heritage, conservationists fear that the borderlands will become another of Europe's environmental casualties.

In February 1990, Professor Dr. Hans-Peter Durr, director of the Munich-based environmental group Global Challenges Network, called for the newly opened frontiers to be protected or at least exploited in an ecologically sound way.

Durr calls the areas "ecological bricks" with which to build "the new house of Europe": "It sounds crazy but it could have tremendous consequences."

To save the border areas from the Eastern Europe's rapidly developing commercial sector, more than 50 environmental organisations have now become members of the Vienna-based action alliance "Ecological Bricks for Our Common House of Europe."

The Ecological Bricks alliance has pinpointed 24

areas from Finland to Greece that should be designated protected areas or allowed to develop according to long-term development plans that offer protection of natural resources.

One of the coordinators of the alliance, Alexander Zinke, says: "We think that these areas are the most appropriate in which to realise a model of sustainable development. They could become examples for the rest of Europe."

But Eastern Europe's shattered economies are forcing policy-makers to open the borderlands so that their natural resources can be exploited.

Such is the case with the densely forested Sumava Mountains separating Czechoslovakia and Germany.

Along with Germany's Bavarian National Park, the Smava Mountains form the largest block of protected forest in Central Europe. They contain pine, birch, spruce, round-eared willow, heather, round-leaved sundew, cotton grass, sedge and sphagnum moss. There are populations of lynx and otters, back storks, capercaille and black grouse, now extinct in Germany.

"I have received reports that the Czech Ministry of Forestry, Water Management and Timber Industry is logging the forests and that there is now intensive agriculture in some areas," says Zbigniew Karbowicz, of the World Conservation Union's Eastern European Programme. "The effects were already noticeable in October last year."

Wolves, brown bears and lynx roam the remote areas of the Rhodope Mountains that divide Bulgaria from Greece and Turkey; 60 per cent of all European species of flowering

plants grow there.

Greece has protected part of the area within its territory, the Rhodope Virgin Forest, Parni National Park in Bulgaria is also protected. But these areas are small compared with the potential 700,000 hectares (1.7 million acres) that could be protected in a single transborder international park.

President of Bulgaria's Wilderness Fund Jeko Spiridonov says that the threat of environmental degradation is already apparent from overgrazing, excessive hunting and tourism.

Zinke pins his hopes of saving Europe's "ecological bricks" on the public. While he hopes to receive funding from the World Bank or the European Commission, ordinary people have been quick to respond to the call for conservation.

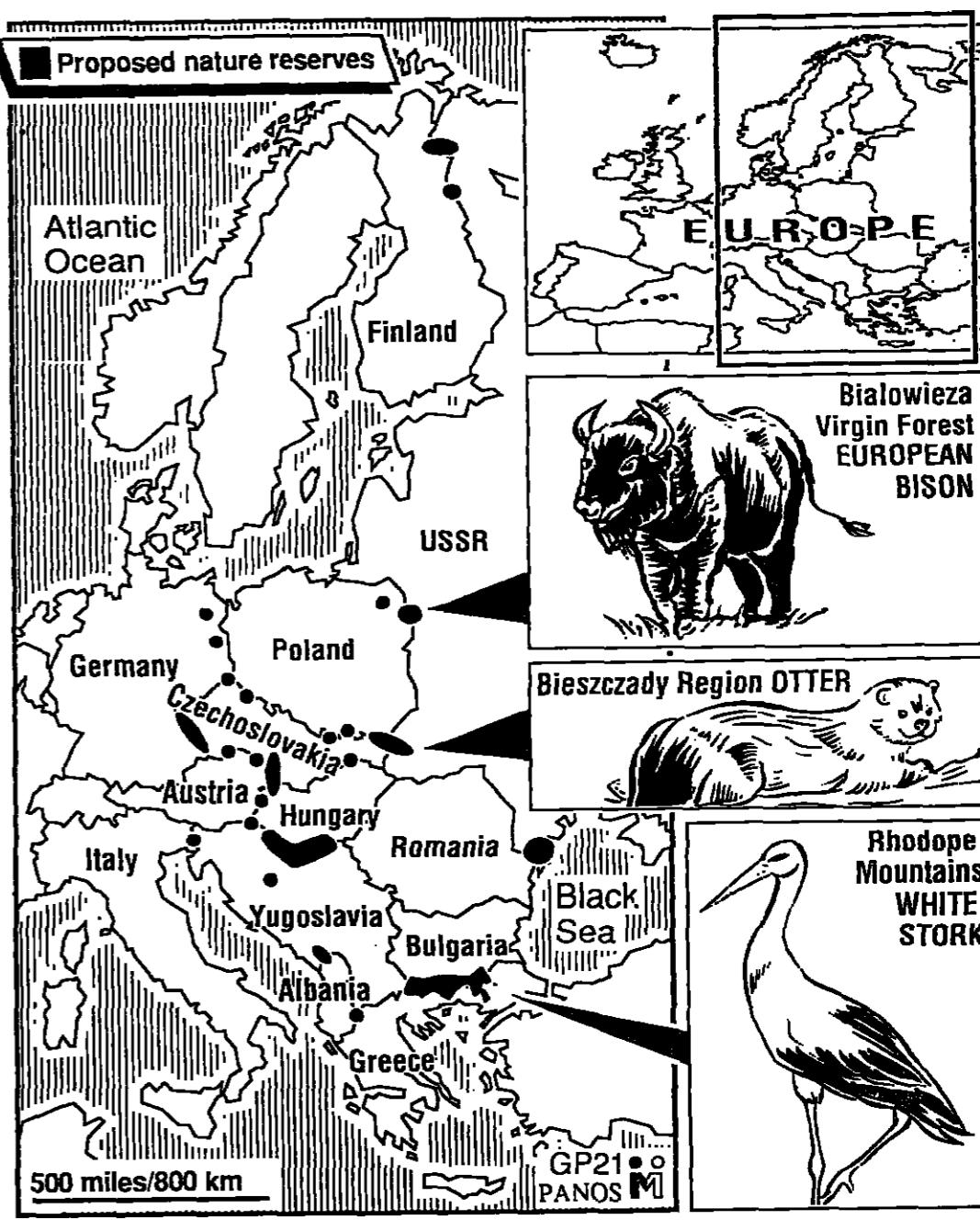
Last year, the Austrian branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature funded a loan to save 411 acres (1,015 hectares) of the Austrian Danube floodplains from commercial development by selling parcels of land to the public at 20 schillings (\$1.60) per square metre. Within the year, the loan was repaid and an important wildlife habitat, forming part of a larger "ecological brick" area, was preserved.

Plans are now underway for a national park on the Danube, funded in the same way.

"We began in February 1990 with nothing but a vision," says Zinke. "Now more and more people help and have become members of the movement. The whole thing is very promising."

Durr, however, is less optimistic: "More than a year has gone by and we still have no funding." — Panos features.

## East Europe's 'ecological bricks'



## Auto world taking electric car seriously

By Catherine Arnst  
Reuter

WORTHING, England — The first commercially viable electric cars should be in production by the middle of next year — not in Detroit or Japan but in the cosy seaside resort of Worthing, on Britain's south coast.

International Automotive Design (IAD), one of the world's largest vehicle engineering firms, is developing the car under contract from a Swedish-British venture called Clean Air Transport Svenska AB. It is to meet the first guaranteed market for battery-operated vehicles, trend-setting Los Angeles.

That car-crazy city has passed laws which breathe new life into an area of automotive research long dismissed by major car makers.

The laws stipulate that two per cent of all cars, vans and light trucks sold in the state in 1998 must be zero emission vehicles (ZEV), meaning they give off no air-polluting exhaust.

By the year 2000, 10 per cent of all cars sold must be ZEVs.

Los Angeles already has eight million cars for 12 million citizens, one of the highest concentrations in the world. Half a million new cars are sold there

each year.

Since no ZEVs are available now, Los Angeles had to make sure someone had a product before it could enforce the law. Clean Air beat more than 200 proposals to win the city's competition to design an electric car.

The company will make 3,000 cars in the first year of production and is assured of selling only a relatively meager 10,000, about an hour's output for a typical car manufacturer.

But Geoffrey Harding, head of IAD's electric car project, said more than 40 U.S. cities were watching the Los Angeles initiative. "If it is successful they will enact the same laws," he said. "Once it starts, the market will be huge."

L.A.'s legislation has already spurred a concerted effort by car companies around the world who do not want to be frozen out of the California market.

California has traditionally led the world in car pollution regulations. It was the first state to require emission-reducing catalytic converters and most cars built in the United States are designed to meet the state's tough standards.

Despite those standards, 77 per cent of the noxious fumes in the

U.S. atmosphere come from car emissions.

The problem is not limited to Los Angeles. Federal studies show that 101 areas in the United States violate ozone standards and 44 violate carbon monoxide standards.

Industry Analysts estimate car manufacturers will spend up to a third of their research budgets in the next few years on development of low emission vehicles.

Ford Motor Co. last month said it would build up to 100 electric vehicles to gain operating experience, although it would not announce any concrete production plans.

General Motors made a big splash last year when it unveiled the impact, a working prototype electric sports car, and has targeted production by 1998.

GM, Ford and Chrysler have also formed an alliance to spend \$100 million developing battery technology, currently the big stumbling block for electric cars.

Japanese manufacturers and the government are also developing an electric car.

But, since it usually takes at

least five years from concept to market for a new car model, the Clean Air car should beat all of these to the market.

Sir John Samuel, director of Clean Air, said work on the prototype is about half done and pilot production should begin in mid-1992. They would produce 30 units a week in Britain in 1993 and start phasing in a U.S. plant around the end of 1994.

However, IAD said that, as programme managers of the project, they think Clean Air's projected production dates are too optimistic.

IAD, which also had a hand in designing the popular Mazda MX-5 Miata, has designed a sporty-looking three-door sedan that can seat four comfortably.

Samuel said the car, dubbed the LA 301, would meet all U.S. federal safety requirements and perform like any smaller car, able to go up to 75 miles per hour (120 kph) and accelerate from 0 to 30 miles per hour (0-46 kph) in nine seconds.

The car also has a small internal combustion engine, which kicks in automatically when the battery for the electric engine starts to run down. The battery can run for 60 miles (96 km) without recharging.

Its main drawbacks are the price — around \$25,000 and the six hours it takes to fully recharge the battery.



Meanwhile, Mercedes-Benz put out the 'car of the future.' A single seat accommodates the driver.

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## Kaiserslautern battles through with 10 men to stay at top

BONN (R) — Kaiserslautern survived the first-half sending off of veteran goalkeeper Gerald Ehrmann to snatch a goalless draw at Fortuna Duesseldorf and hang on to their lead at the top of the German Bundesliga Saturday.

The south-west club, who fought to avoid relegation last season, struggled with 10 men after the 32-year-old Ehrmann was dismissed two minutes before the interval for a professional foul on Fortuna's Norwegian Jorn Andersen.

But despite stretching their unbeaten run to 12 matches, Kaiserslautern's lead at the top was cut to two points after second-placed Bayern Munich beat Borussia Dortmund 3-2 Friday.

As one of the most exciting championship races for years enters its final phase, Karlheinz Feldkamp's side are starting to show signs of nerves. The Bundesliga has four round of fixtures

remaining.

Third-placed Werder Bremen, the 1988 champions, lost touch with the leaders after dropping two vital points in a 1-0 defeat at home to VFB Stuttgart.

Now five points behind Kaiserslautern, their hopes of a trophy this season now look to hinge on next month's West German Cup final against Cologne in Berlin.

After losing Ehrmann, Kaiserslautern seemed happy to play for a draw and restricted their play to counter-attacks.

"We had to rethink to go second-placed Dynamo are two points ahead of Rot-Weiss Erfurt. But they have a goal difference of 20 compared to Erfurt's three and are very unlikely to be stopped from joining champions Hansa Rostock in the Bundesliga."

Bayern needed an 88th-minute winner from teenager Christian Ziege at Borussia Dortmund after Gerhard Poschner and Michael Rummenigge had scored for the hosts and Roland Grauhammer and Dane Brian Laud-

rup for the Bavarians.

But coach Jupp Heynckes was delighted his team were still in the championship race.

"It was a great match and our best performance over 90 minutes this season," he said. "We showed great spirit."

In the East German Oberliga, seasonal European campaigners Dynamo Dresden beat Lokomotive Leipzig 2-1 away are now almost certain of the second qualifying place for next season's United German first division.

With one match to go, second-

placed Rot-Weiss Erfurt. But they have a goal difference of 20 compared to Erfurt's three and are very unlikely to be stopped from joining champions Hansa Rostock in the Bundesliga."

The first division, however, will be without Hertha Berlin who lost their battle against relegation when they were beaten 3-2 at home by Wattenscheid.

## Graf storms into German Open final

BERLIN (R) — A relaxed Steffi Graf flashed a clear message of intent to her rivals Sunday with a devastating performance in the semifinals of the German Open.

The world number two produced some of her best tennis in months to humiliate Czechoslovakia's Jana Novotna 6-1 6-0 and confessed afterwards she felt like the champion she used to be.

"I felt like the old Steffi," she said, reflecting on a traumatic year affected by allegations about her father Peter's personal life.

"My serve needs a little work, but the way I was playing she wasn't able to do anything at all. I just feel much better in general about myself."

Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, a 7-5 7-6 4-1 winner over American Jennifer Capriati, will line up against her in Monday's final but a shattered Novotna, the oldest semifinalist at the ripe old age of 22, predicted only one possible result.

"If she (Graf) plays like she did today, there is no way anyone can beat her," said Novotna, the

fourth seed who upset Graf in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open in January.

"She made no mistakes and I feel she is back to her best. No one has played as well against me this year."

Graf, deposed as world number one by Monica Seles in mid-March and under increasing pressure from Gabriela Sabatini, has not won a Grand Slam title for 16 months.

But with the French Open starting on May 27, she is showing every sign of a renewed appetite.

After a night out at a rock concert, she looked infinitely sharper than she had been against quarterfinal opponent Radka Zrubakova, hustling Novotna out of her stride from the outset.

The unfortunate Czechoslovak had three break points for a 2-1 lead in the first set and paid a heavy price for letting the German off the hook.

She failed to win another game and was systematically destroyed in all departments long before the

end of a contest lasting 59 minutes.

Sanchez Vicario's victory over the 15-year-old Capriati, interrupted briefly by rain in the second set, required much more persistence.

The young American, who had beaten her opponent in straight sets in their only previous meeting last year, provided spirited resistance and came back from 4-1 down to 4-4 in a tense final set.

It was not quite enough, however, and Sanchez Vicario, again employing her trademark drop shot from the back of the court, finally triumphed after two hours 21 minutes on court.

## Sanchez wins Italian Open

ROME (R) — Emilio Sanchez of Spain won his first major tennis title when he beat Argentine Alberto Mancini, who pulled a hamstring muscle in the second set in the final of the Italian Open Championship Sunday.

The unseeded Argentine, champion in 1989 but forced to qualify this year, retired when his ninth-seeded opponent led 6-3 6-1 3-0.

"At the start of the second set I felt a pain," Mancini, 22, said.

The first game of the second set was the last Mancini won. He lost all support in his left leg and played with a bandage on his left thigh.

The right-handed Sanchez, a clay court specialist ranked 16th in the world, took his total of career victories to 13.

It was not immediately certain Strike The Gold would get another shot at Hansel in the 1½-mile Belmont Stakes on June 8.

As to whether Hansel would make the trip to New York, Brothers said, "if he comes out of the race all right, I'll have to talk to Mr. Albritton and we will see about it. He is a lasix horse but not a bad bleeder."

At his best, Hansel was much too much for his rivals.

Albritton did not look at the smashing victory as redemption, however.

"Redemption isn't an issue in the horse business," he said.

"There are a lot more lows than there are highs, so you'd spend a whole lot of time in redemption if you have to redeem all your losses."

"Our plan was to make sure he was on his toes and in position going into the first turn and then let it up to him from then on," said jockey Jerry Bailey.

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH  
1990 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

### LOSE ONE, WIN TWO

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

**NORTH**  
♦ Void  
Q 8 7  
K J 10 5 2  
♦ Q 9 5 4 2

**WEST** ♦ Q 9 6 4 2 ♦ A J 10 3  
2 5 4  
8 7 4 A Q 6 3  
♦ A J 7 3 ♦ K 10 6

**SOUTH**  
♦ K 8 7 5  
A K J 10 9 6 3  
9  
♦ 8

The bidding:  
South West North East  
4 — Pass Pass Dbl  
Pass 4 ♦ 5 Pass  
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Two of

This deal is from a match between two teams of internationalists. It was not until much later that one of the players spotted that the deal was a real gem.

South was a little unhappy at not being given a chance to double four spades, although no one could fault North forumping a spade to the hearts. (Indeed, to defeat four spades requires very careful defense.) West elected to lead a trump.

Declarer won in hand and ran the nine of diamonds to East's queen. The trump return was taken in dummy and the king of diamonds was led for a ruffing finesse. Whether or not East covered immediately, declarer was eventually able to discard three losers on the good diamonds, using a spade ruff as the entry to dummy.

That all seems normal enough, doesn't it? Take a good look at the diagram before reading on.

Actually, West had found an excellent lead, forcing declarer to use an entry before it could be put to profitable purpose. Have you seen how the defense can prevail?

Suppose that, when declarer runs the nine of diamonds, East does not win the trick. Declarer has won a cheap trick, but is now an entry short to set up the diamonds. South can ruff two spades in dummy, but as long as East covers any diamond led from the table, declarer will have to end up losing two spades and a club.

Incidentally, switch the five and six of diamonds, and declarer can always make the contract by overtaking the nine of diamonds with dummy's ten. With the seven and eight dropping under the jack and king, the fourth round will be won by North's six over East's five!

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Suppose that, when declarer runs the nine of diamonds, East does not win the trick. Declarer has won a cheap trick, but is now an entry short to set up the diamonds. South can ruff two spades in dummy, but as long as East covers any diamond led from the table, declarer will have to end up losing two spades and a club.

Incidentally, switch the five and six of diamonds, and declarer can always make the contract by overtaking the nine of diamonds with dummy's ten. With the seven and eight dropping under the jack and king, the fourth round will be won by North's six over East's five!

Declarer won in hand and ran the nine of diamonds to East's queen. The trump return was taken in dummy and the king of diamonds was led for a ruffing finesse. Whether or not East covered immediately, declarer was eventually able to discard three losers on the good diamonds, using a spade ruff as the entry to dummy.

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## Weekly market summary May 13-May 17, 1991

In a continuation to the significant dollar had witnessed during the previous week, the U.S. dollar maintained its downward trend early last week, to reach its lowest levels Wednesday, then rallied Thursday and Friday to end the week well above its early lows.

The dollar traded higher against the yen but lower against the mark and other European currencies in the Far East Monday as dealers continued to take long dollar and short positions against the yen in anticipation of a drop in Japanese interest rates. Bank of Japan's intervention stopped the yen's slide, but the move was later explained as an attempt to stabilize yen exchange rates as a prelude to lowering the discount rate. The dollar rallied briefly against the mark in Europe later that day as rumours that the Bundesbank president Karl Otto Pöhl, will resign before the end of the year resurfaced. The rumour was disregarded in New York and the mark finished higher as cross trading activity featuring long mark/short yen positions resumed.

The U.S. currency fell further Tuesday, dropping below support at (1.70) marks and fueling expectations of an imminent drop to (1.65) marks. The U.S. currency had edged slightly higher in early New York trading at the release of retail sales figures showing a slight drop of (0.1%) in April, while March figures showed a rise of (0.4%), revised from (0.8%) fall. April consumer prices rose (0.2%), but had little impact as they were in line with expectations. But observers maintained that the dollar was weighed on by the lack of any indication of an imminent U.S. economic recovery, by an apparent easing of political tensions in the Soviet Union and by a growing feeling that the German economy can handle the problems brought about by the German unification. The German currency drew further strength from a general market reassessment of the implications of Mr. Pöhl's possible resignation. While the Bundesbank president continued to refuse to comment on the subject, he was reported as saying the Bundesbank would have to maintain a relatively restrictive monetary policy, minutes before the New York market closed.

The dollar dropped to its lowest levels during the week Wednesday, closing in New York at (1.6833/45) marks, (1.57/07/17) yen and at (1.7540/50) dollars to the sterling pound. As the market continued to reassess the U.S. currency's upward surge since the end of the Gulf war,

the dollar was pushed further down by a statement issued by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who was reported to have told a news conference "We will not do anything that will endanger the stability of the German currency."

Confirmation by a Bundesbank official that Mr. Pöhl would resign before the end of this year, and position readjustments by dealers ahead of the weekend and the release of U.S. trade figures for March Friday, combined to raise dollar exchange rates in Europe and New York Thursday, and in the Far East Friday. The U.S. currency rose further in late Europe and early New York Friday at the release of U.S. balance of payments figures showing a drop in the trade deficit to \$14.05 billion in March, compared to expectations of a \$15.6 billion deficit. But the rally soon lost steam as it became clear that the deficit reduction was caused by a drop in U.S. imports rather than a rise in exports, which was interpreted as a further sign of weak U.S. economic activity. The dollar later surged, however, when Sweden announced that the crown would be tied to the ECU instead of the previous basket of currencies, which included the dollar. Scandinavian arbitrageurs who were caught short dollars/long marks on an interest arbitrage play were forced to scramble the unwind long mark positions on the one hand, and to cover short drop it positions on the other.

Despite intervention by the Bundesbank and the Federal Reserve, the dollar rose to end the week well above closing levels at the end of the previous week against European currencies, but slightly lower against the yen, at (1.7380/90) marks, (138.30/40) yen and at (1.7105/15) dollars to pound. Mark gains versus the yen were thus wiped out as the German currency ended the week at (79.58) marks, down from a Wednesday high of (81.44) yen, and from a close of (80.49) yen at the end of the previous week.

Expectations of continued dollar weakness have all but faded as a result of last Friday's developments. Observers have concluded that technical buying, inspired by the dollar's rise above (1.72) marks, could fuel a further rise above (1.75) marks in the week ahead.

However, confusion abounds as to whether further position readjustments by Scandinavian dealers can be expected this week as a result of the Swedish crown's linkage to the ECU, and the net effect of said readjustments on major currency exchange rates.

## Comecon to be buried in Hungary next month

MOSCOW (R) — Comecon, the trade group that struggled for 42 years to integrate the economies of the Soviet Bloc, will be dissolved next month.

Trade and economy ministers from Comecon, the nine-nation Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), passed the death sentence on the organisation at a two-day meeting in Moscow.

The burial will take place at a final Comecon meeting in Budapest on June 28, Hungary's International Economic Relations Minister Bela Kadar told a news conference Saturday.

Members will continue to help each other on the difficult road to a market economy and try to revive their flagging trade.

Comecon was founded in 1949 to integrate the economies of the Soviet Bloc by harmonising central plans and allowing different resources but relatively rent industries.

The Soviet Union, rich in natural resources but relatively underdeveloped, provided cheap energy and raw materials to its industrialised allies, who in return supplied it and each other with cheap, but poor-quality, manufactured goods.

Though Comecon succeeded in its aim of integration — five years ago members conducted 60 per cent of their foreign trade with each other — the system meant members were cut off from the world market and its competitive influences.

Trade was conducted through a web of interlocking government barter agreements and deals were booked in an accounting unit, the transferable rouble — which had no real existence and in practice could not be transferred.

The main question is CMEA property and there are no identical positions among the delegations," Kadar said.

Cooperation between members of Comecon — the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania, and Moscow's Third World allies Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam —

is accounted for about a third of all Japanese travelling overseas in 1990, the ministry said.

A total of 3.5 million foreign nationals entered the country last year as tourists or workers, up almost 17 per cent over the previous year, it said.

The figure represents a 13.8 per cent rise over 1989.

Young adults in their 20s accounted for about a third of all Japanese travelling overseas in 1990, the ministry said.

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## NATO is in dispute over how to deal with Eastern Europe

BRUSSELS (R) — NATO is divided over how to help old foes in once-Communist Eastern Europe, now that many seek aid from the Western alliance to overcome political problems and find stability.

NATO sources told Reuters the differences came to a head in a meeting of the 16 ambassadors from alliance nations last Wednesday. Some, led by the United States and Germany, want to increase diplomatic and military contacts substantially.

But France is worried that this could take away a vital role for the 34-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which it sees as an essential building block for rebuilding trust and confidence now the cold war is over.

"The meeting last week saw the differences between France and the United States drawn quite sharply," said one alliance source, who asked not to be identified.

The problem goes to the heart of NATO's future role in Europe and how it fits in with other institutions like the European Community and the CSCE.

The alliance has made clear to

countries like Hungary and Czechoslovakia — members of the now-defunct Warsaw Pact — that they will not be able to join the Western alliance and cannot expect security guarantees from the West.

NATO is worried that any such moves could upset the already unstable Soviet Union, where hardliners are angry about the loss of Kremlin allies in Eastern Europe and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from those countries.

But Eastern European nations, feeling vulnerable in the Soviet shadow, have presented a long list of areas where they would like to cooperate, going beyond the high-level diplomatic and military contacts that the alliance has offered over the past year as a symbol of their new relationship.

"They know they can't have membership, but they want to get everything else they can," said another NATO source.

Their "wish list" includes discussing the potential problem of Eastern European mass migration to the wealthy West, help with converting their arms industries to civilian production, participation in NATO's non-military

scientific work and far more civilian contacts and exchanges.

NATO foreign ministers, meeting in Copenhagen next month, are expected to agree a new initiative in this field. But the current dispute may mean that this is watered down. "It's not clear whether we'll have it resolved by then," said one source.

Although disagreements within NATO on this issue have surfaced before, a U.S.-German initiative in Washington this month has given the debate a new edge.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher produced a list of proposals for increased contacts. They were careful to include the Soviet Union as well as other Eastern European countries.

The proposals included more high-level political visits in both directions and help with the problems of civilian supervision of the military — not an issue previously when Eastern European nations were one-party Communist states.

Other steps included conversion of defence industries, greater contacts between parliamenta-

rians and military officials and even discussing NATO's review of its military strategy with the alliance's former foes.

France, which resents U.S. leadership of the alliance and is not a member of NATO's military structure, does not want to see that alliance's role expanded beyond its traditional role of safeguarding the West's security.

But it has won qualified support from some other European NATO members worried that the fledgling CSCE, which includes North America with all European states except Albania, could be weakened if NATO takes on too much.

"The point about CSCE is that it includes the Soviets," said one NATO diplomat. "Moscow is still suspicious about NATO in some ways and we don't want to make the Soviets feel they are being isolated or treated differently in any way."

The 34 foreign ministers of the CSCE nations meet in Berlin in June, when they are expected to give more concrete shape to what is now little more than a set of declarations on human rights and the rights of nations.

## Croatians vote on independence amid crisis

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia (R) — The Republic of Croatia began voting Sunday in an independence referendum that could decide if it remains in crisis-torn Yugoslavia.

The first of more than 3.6 million registered voters turned out in heavy rain to vote whether Croatia remains part of the Yugoslav Federation or becomes a sovereign state in a loose alliance of the country's republics.

Voting started at 7 a.m. (0500 GMT) and Croatian officials said they expected up to 80 per cent of voters to cast their ballots in favour of sovereignty.

The poll took place amid a constitutional crisis which has left Yugoslavia for four days without a president or armed forces commander-in-chief because of rivalry among the six Yugoslav republics.

Croatia and neighbouring Slovenia want the Balkan Federation transformed into an alliance of sovereign states, saying they will secede otherwise.

Croatia's historical arch-rival, Serbia, advocates a centrally-controlled federation and is backed by tiny Montenegro.

They blocked the election of Stipe Mesić, a Croat, as president last week, saying he would break up Yugoslavia.

Croatia's referendum was likely to further strain relations between Croats and the republic's 600,000 Serbian minority. Serbs in Croatia held their own referendum last Sunday and voted overwhelmingly to stay in Yugoslavia and join Serbia.

Croatia is Yugoslavia's second biggest republic and has a population of 4.5 million. It is one of the more prosperous and is relatively westernised.

Meanwhile an ethnic Albanian was shot dead and two policemen were wounded Saturday in Yugoslavia's mainly Albanian-populated Kosovo province, Tancung news agency said.

Advanī, a clean-living, avuncular 63-year-old, is a lawyer who

## 3 Indian party leaders are confident of poll win

NEW DELHI (R) — Three men say they are confident of being able to form the next government of the world's most populous democracy after Indian elections.

A fourth, sure that no party will win a majority, sees himself as the likely kingmaker or even a compromise prime minister.

The four men wooing India's 514 million voters in the May 20, 23 and 26 election are:

Rajiv Gandhi: The reluctant politician who led the Congress Party to its second defeat since India won independence from Britain in 1947. Grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, the airline pilot entered politics on the death of his younger brother Sanjay in 1980 under pressure from his mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter.

He succeeded her home after she was assassinated in October 1984. Promising to lead India into the 21st century, he won a landslide victory in elections that December.

He later became mired in charges of corruption and inefficiency and Congress lost its majority in November 1989. In opposition, it helped bring down one minority government a year later and backed another, under Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar.

Gandhi confessed he was taken by surprise when Shekhar quit in March to force the election. Powerful regional Congress bosses will threaten Gandhi's leadership if he fails at the polls.

Gandhi, 46, has sought to shrug off both the pro-rich image that helped defeat him in 1989 and the sluggish image he acquired in opposition. His Italian wife Sonia has tried hard to identify with Indian culture.

Lal Krishan Advani: Likely prime ministerial candidate of the right-wing, Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which has surged late in the campaign. Few outside its ranks see it winning a majority, but not for want of skilful efforts by Advani to project it as India's party of salvation.

Advani, a clean-living, avuncular 63-year-old, is a lawyer who

puts BJP policy across persuasively to the outside world and to moderate urban voters. He can also strike up an instant rapport with crowds of Hindi-speaking villagers.

He hopes the BJP will ride to victory on a wave of Hindu emotion over the site of a 16th century mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya. Advani courted arrest last year by marching to claim the site, which he says is the birthplace of the Hindu god Lord Rama. His protest helped bring down the government of

Vishwanath Pratap Singh: creator of an anti-Congress alliance that took power as a minority government with outside support from the BJP and Communists in December 1989.

Singh had quit Congress after launching an anti-corruption drive as Gandhi's finance minister. Hailed by Indian media as "Mr. Clean," Singh lasted just 11 months as prime minister, a job he had always insisted he did not want.

In August 1990 he suddenly decided to implement a 10-year-old plan to raise the proportion of government jobs reserved for low-castes in the Hindu hierarchy to nearly 50 per cent.

Chandra Shekhar: Became prime minister, a job he had openly coveted, after splitting Singh's Janata Dal and winning Congress support last November.

The committed Socialist, with his strong country accent and his friends of shady character, was widely despised when he took power leading just 10 per cent of the 545-seat parliament.

He transformed his image as he tackled major issues with a style all of his own. Congress kept blocking him. Shekhar, ever forthright and approachable, rarely flustered, kept winning a few. Even his statement that a man with a criminal record was still a friend impressed the chic as refreshingly down-to-Earth.

Shekhar, 64, has no chance of winning power alone. He hopes to win enough seats to make him power broker — or even compromise prime minister — in a hung parliament.

## COLUMN 8

### Queen Elizabeth takes sea breather

MIAMI (R) — The royal yacht Britannia became a slow boat to Tampa on the weekend, as Queen Elizabeth headed for the Gulf of Mexico coastline city after a hectic visit to Miami. The Britannia, accompanied by the Royal Navy frigate Ambuscade, steamed out of Miami around midnight Friday on its way to Tampa, the financial and business centre where the queen were scheduled to arrive Monday. She and her husband, Prince Philip, hosted an on-board dinner party for 50 Friday which was attended by former Presidents Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan and their spouses and which was followed by a reception for some 200 notables. On Saturday afternoon, the Britannia put into Fort Jefferson, a national park in the largely inaccessible eight-island dry tortuga chain, about 120 kilometres west of the southern tip of Florida.

### U.S. seeks transplant recipients from AIDS carrier

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. government is tracking down transplanted organs and tissues from a dead Virginia man with AIDS that have already killed three people and may have infected dozens of others in 16 states. Four organs, 53 tissue grafts and two corneas were taken from the man in October 1985 and later transplanted into others, government officials said. The man, a 22-year-old from Virginia Beach, Virginia, died from a gunshot wound to the head during a robbery. The case is the first in the United States in which a large number of recipients of human tissue transplants have been placed at risk of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) by a single donor. It is the third in the country in which recipients of transplanted organs are known to have become infected with the AIDS virus, officials said.

### Viking ship sets sail for raid on America

REKEFJORD, NORWAY (AP) — Viking ships set sail from Norway's west coast from a raid on America led by glory-starved Norsemen with an axe to grind about sights to their ancestor Leif Ericsson. Norwegians and Icelanders have fumed for centuries about Christopher Columbus stealing the credit from their forefather. Ericsson for discovering the new world. "Probably 99 per cent of all Americans know about Columbus. Maybe 10 per cent are aware that Leif Ericsson arrived first," said Henrik Nissen-Lie, a spokesman for the expedition, called "Vinland revisited." Ericsson, the Iceland-born son of a Norwegian Viking, named the land he discovered "Vinland" and set up a colony, according to Norse sagas. Under bright, sunny skies on Norway's Constitution Day, flag-waving crowds cheered and an armada of pleasure boats escorted the sinfully beautiful 22-metre (72-foot) Viking longships with carved wooden dragonheads on their prows as they sailed out of Bergen Fjord. The three longships, with a mainly Norwegian and Icelandic crew totalling about 20, intend to prowl the east coast of North America as the new world gears up for the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in what is now Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

### Mahler's 10th Symphony going home to Vienna

LONDON (AP) — The draft manuscript of most of Gustav Mahler's 10th Symphony has been sold privately for an undisclosed sum and will be reunited with its other parts in the Austrian National Library in Vienna. Sotheby's auction house said The 108-page manuscript carried a presale estimate of £550,000 to £680,000. But the auction house said it had allowed the private sale from the unidentified owner to the Gustav Mahler and 21st Century Association, a private foundation. The association said it had bought the manuscript for the library in Vienna. "We only withdraw lots in exceptional cases, usually when they can go to their country of origin," said Sotheby's spokeswoman D'Este Bond. The 10th Symphony was composed but not fully completed when Mahler knew he was dying and losing his wife Alma to architect Walter Gropius. They married after Mahler died in Vienna in 1911.

## Storm, fresh rains worsen floods; death toll rises to 85 in Bangladesh

DHAKA (AP) — A storm lashed a northeastern town and torrential rains flooded more districts in the latest calamities to hit Bangladesh since last month's cyclone, weather officials said Sunday.

More than 500 mud-and-thatch houses were destroyed and trees and electricity poles were ripped off from the ground during a storm Saturday in Sylhet town, the weather office said. There were no deaths.

But two more people drowned in flood waters in Sylhet district and four people died in thunderstorms in Netrokona, raising to 85 the official toll from floods this month. Newspaper reports say about 215 people have died.

About 172,000 people have been left homeless by floods in the districts of Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Netrokona and Moulvibazar.

## Mexican troops surround jail after 18 die in riot

MATAMOROS, Mexico (R) — Hundreds of Mexican marines and police surrounded a prison close to the U.S. border after police said 18 inmates were killed and 10 wounded in fighting between rival drug gangs.

"It was purely internal. When tensions calm and we establish internal control, we will go after those responsible for the killings," State Judicial Police spokesman Noe Hinojosa told reporters.

A force of 200 Mexican Marines was joined by special anti-riot teams and Federal Judicial Police units outside the Cereso state prison near a residential neighbourhood of Matamoros, just across the Rio Grande River from Brownsville, Texas.

Rioting broke out Friday evening.

Police said the fighting began when Oliverio Chavez, a Mexican drug baron accused of running a multi-million dollar cocaine operation linked to Colombia's Medellin cartel from his prison cell, was shot and seriously injured by members of a rival drug gang.

They said that Chavez' henchmen retaliated, cornering the rival gang to Matamoros drug dealer Juan Garcia Abrego in a room at the prison and setting fire to it, killing the inmates as they fled the flames.

## Albanian president appeals for end to general strike

VIENNA (R) — Albania's Communist president, Ramiz Alia, has appealed to workers to end a general strike which has paralysed the country's factories and transport network for three days.

"I appeal to all to return to work as the sole possibility to save the country and ourselves from the fatality of failure," Alia said in an address carried by the Albanian News Agency (ATA).

Alia made his appeal after tens of thousands of strikers and their supporters marched through the capital Tirana, chanting anti-government slogans.

Saturday, a normal working day in Albania strike called by the independent trade union federation to press economic and political demands.

The federation is calling for wage increases of 50 to 100 per cent for most workers and a full investigation into the killing of four Democratic Party activists during unrest in the northern

## Roh draws up package to end protests

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo, trying to end nearly a month of political and social turmoil, faces a week of tough decisions which could include freeing top dissidents and firing his close confidant, Premier Ro Ja-Bong.

Roh and his aides were drawing up a policy package Sunday to win the support of the country's large and politically dominant middle class who are increasingly questioning Roh's leadership, government sources said.

Political commentators say that, although the past few weeks have seen hundreds of thousands of anti-government demonstrators pour into the streets, Roh could take the nation back to normality with a quick fix of political and economic reforms.

They said the current turmoil was different from mass protests in 1987 that forced strongman President Chun Doo Hwan to give up power.

"The quiet majority ... do not want current demonstrations to be pushed to an extreme situation," the national daily Hankuk Ilbo said.

"Roh has room to turn the situation around by reshuffling the cabinet and promoting other convincing measures furthering democracy," said.

The April 24 beating to death by police of student activist Kang Kyung-Dae provided a rallying point for fractious student, worker and dissident groups and transformed their moribund activities into the strongest challenge to the government in four years.

The protests reached a new climax Saturday, the 11th anniversary of a popular revolt in the southern city of Kwangju against martial law authorities. Troops brutally crushed the revolt at the cost of hundreds of lives.

Business leaders have been growing increasingly frustrated by the lack of a comprehensive economic plan.

"Aristide is sitting on top of a volcano," said Ronald Chenet, an insurance agency owner. "He must address conflicting concerns, those of the people and those of the very rich."

But Aristide appears to be having considerable success in breaking the power of the feared TonTon Macoutes, paramilitary forces created by Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier who terrorised the populace from the start of the Duvalier regime in 1957.

Aristide's principal campaign promise was to bring the Macoutes' reign to an end and wipe out the vestiges of the long Duvalier era, which ended in February 1986 when Duvalier's son, Jean-Claude, fled the country.

Until Aristide's election, however, Duvalier supporters continued to rule, and the roots of the economic and social system planted by the dictator remain solid.

When the government asked the handful of wealthy businessmen who control rice, cement and sugar imports to lower their prices, they were instead raised.

The bloated, Duvalier-structured government Aristide inherited continues by its very existence to thwart reform.

"It was never meant to serve the people," said Claudette Werleigh, one of Aristide's inner circle of advisers. "On a daily basis we are faced with a huge apparatus whose main function was to enrich government officials or to reward political friends or family."

Bureaucratic salaries eat up more than 90 per cent of the budget.

"We've been hammering away at three themes — constitutional, fiscal and parliamentary reform," he said during an interview at his office in downtown Calgary.

His party would, among other things, replace the senate — now appointed by the prime minister and his government — with an elected one. This would give each province equal representation, as in the United States, to offset the population-based representation of the House of Commons.

The Reform Party says it also would ensure that all the provinces are treated the same, and do something about what it sees as runaway federal spending.